

faith
with
Wings

AMYLURILEY

Published by
AmyLu Riley
Evansville, Indiana
United States of America
<https://amylu-riley.com>

Faith with Wings
Copyright © 2020 by AmyLu Riley

Published by AmyLu Riley
Evansville, Indiana, United States of America
books@amylu-riley.com

ISBN: 978-0-9973496-4-1 (paperback)
ISBN: 978-0-9973496-7-2 (ebook)
Library of Congress Control Number: 2019905882

First Edition, 2020

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other—except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, a division of Tyndale House Ministries, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked NKJV are taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked MSG are taken from *THE MESSAGE*, copyright © 1993, 2002, 2018 by Eugene H. Peterson. Used by permission of NavPress. All rights reserved. Represented by Tyndale House Publishers, a Division of Tyndale House Ministries.

Cover design: Richard Riley
Cover photo: Chris Sabor on Unsplash
Typefaces: Sorts Mill Gaudy by Barry Schwartz, Scriptina, Libre Franklin

Printed by Kindle Direct Publishing
Charleston, South Carolina, United States of America

Also by AmyLu Riley

[Faith with Grit for the Not-Yet Healed](#)

[Stay: Why I'm Still Here, A Spiritual Memoir](#)

[Jesus as Healer: Miracles and Meditations in Luke](#)

Join the email list

<https://amylu-riley.com/subscribe>

Contents

1. For the Love of God 13
 2. Can God Be Trusted? 19
 3. Demolition 37
 4. Commissioned 41
 5. Awakening 43
 6. What Does God Want? 49
 7. Case Not Closed 67
 8. Seeing the Battlefield 75
 9. Active Duty 85
 10. Power 91
 11. Loving Christ 95
 12. My Isaac 101
- Note from the Author 109
- Acknowledgements 111
- Questions for Believers 113
- Notes 117

For the Love of God

As the years continued to pass without complete healing, I sometimes felt a little resentful toward Paul.

First, because he got such *clear* revelation about the *reason* for his *thorn in the flesh*, whatever it was.¹ And second, because he apparently received an answer from God each time he prayed about it—even though it wasn't the response he had asked for.

... I have received such wonderful revelations from God. So to keep me from becoming proud, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan to torment me and keep me from becoming proud.

Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. Each time he said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness."

2 CORINTHIANS 12:7–9

Since God deals with each of us uniquely (John 21:22; Matthew 20:12), I knew it wasn't a good idea for me to zero in on this single instance of God's dealings with Paul and demand the same style of communication from God for myself. There were people who had prayed for far longer than I, who had *also* heard

no such reply. But sometimes I just wished God would clue me in about what was going on in my life.

And then, one day, as I read Jesus's message to the church at Ephesus (Revelation 2:1-7), I realized that I had another problem—even bigger than being unhealed.

"You have patiently suffered for me without quitting.

But I have this complaint against you. You don't love me or each other as you did at first!"

REVELATION 2:3-4

I knew that Jesus could say the same thing about my love for him, and that he'd be right.

And I knew that had to change.

Cool Love

I do *love* God, of course, but—I have awakened to the realization—definitely not in the way I should. My love for God seems to be only in my *mind*, which is not the same as the love he *wants* me to have—love that pervades the heart, mind, and soul; love that spills out in action toward others. He wants the love described in 1 John 4:7-12.

I think Jesus's word *complaint* (in Revelation 2:4) pinpoints the cause. Without even being aware of it until now, I think I have harbored an unformed complaint against God. I haven't given it words, or a voice. I have kept my head down, and I have

kept on. But I can see it in my heart: I am disappointed at the way I perceive God has chosen to deal with me. My *reality* has not yet fallen into line with my *expectations* of him, which I *thought* were based on Scripture.

Yet, it's not only that. The way God has handled his end of things has been painful, and pain itself has been a wedge.

I see from Scripture that I am not alone in that.

Job had complaints, too—a number of them. Although Job was *commended for his perseverance* (James 5:11)—just as the church of Ephesus was in Revelation 2—Job had *many* complaints against God, and he even *called* them that. (See Job 6:5; 7:11; 9:27; 10:1; 21:4; 23:2; and perhaps also 13:3, 15.) Job talked about being sick at heart and terrified (Job 23:16). He said that God had “wronged” him (Job 19:6) and “persecuted” him (Job 19:22); that God didn’t answer him—or even look at him—when he cried to God (Job 30:20); and that God had become cruel toward him (Job 30:21). *And God confirmed that Job was right about all of that* (Job 42:7).

Jesus felt it, too. And even though Jesus *knew* the plan for his own suffering, *agreed* to it, and then willingly *submitted* to carrying it out, he also still *felt pain* at the way God dealt with him.

At about three o'clock, Jesus called out with a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” which means “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?”

MATTHEW 27:46

Jesus's pain had even been prophesied—and felt, in some measure—by David:

*Why are you so far away when I groan for help?
Every day I call to you, my God, but you do not answer.
Every night I lift my voice, but I find no relief.*

PSALM 22:1–2

But, of course, God didn't leave Jesus stuck in that pain. After Jesus's resurrection from the dead and appearances to the disciples, Jesus was later "taken up into heaven and sat down in the place of honor at God's right hand" (Mark 16:19)—a reality that is *quite the opposite* of abandonment by God.

If I can adjust my *expectations* to align correctly with *who God really is* and *what he actually does*—and if I can realize that I, too, will come *through* my own pain at *some point*—can I get through it all *loving him*?

Paul did. His suffering never seemed to interrupt his deep intimacy with God.

And, so, Jesus's words to the church in Ephesus convict me: *So, you think that what you've been through constitutes grounds for complaint against me? Listen to my complaint against you. Your love has cooled off.*

Maybe this is why Jesus said the greatest *commandment* is to love God (Matthew 22:37–38). Things that are easy and just come naturally usually don't need to be made into commandments. So

if loving God is *the greatest commandment*, maybe it is also *the most difficult thing to do*.

The reasons I assumed I'd *ended up* in this state of cooled love seemed outside my control. Yet, it must still be *possible* to love God with all my heart, mind, and soul, or else Jesus wouldn't have spoken about it the way he did (Matthew 22:37; Revelation 2:3-4).

And even though obedience is not optional, but *imperative*, doesn't the mandate to love God point beyond mere rule-keeping to the reality that *love* is the preferred state in which to *live* in relationship with a God who is love?

I recognized that I *needed* to love God fully, *and I wanted to*. But how?

God, show me what to do to love you more.

I imagined all the wedges to my closeness with God—all of my *complaints*—being turned upside down, becoming fulcrums to leverage my suffering into the very thing that presses me closer to God's heart than I have ever been. Rather than be on the *defensive* against God in areas of my life that were painful to me, I would partner *with* him to go on the *offensive* against the gates of Hell.

It sounded good, but what could actually bring that vision to life? I asked God to help me.

I could not have foreseen the forms that help would take.

Questions for Believers

Chapter 1 – For the Love of God

1. If Jesus were writing a letter to me like those in Revelation 2 and 3, what could he say about my love for him?
2. How are my complaints against God connected to my answer to question 1?
3. What do I need to ask God for help with?

Notes

Chapter 1 For the Love of God

1. Some believe that Paul's thorn was a physical health problem, such as malaria (John Wilkinson, *The Bible and Healing: A Medical and Theological Commentary*, (Eerdmans Pub Co., 2000)) or some other infirmity. Others have postulated that the thorn was *not* sickness, but human opposition to Paul's work (John Wimber and Kevin Springer, *Power Healing* (HarperOne, 1987)). My present position is to regard the thorn as a physical affliction, in part because of the following:

- God and Paul both use the word *weakness* (Greek: *astheneiais*) in direct reference to Paul's thorn in the flesh (2 Corinthians 12:9).
- In 2 Corinthians 12:10, Paul lists his *weaknesses* as separate items from *the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles* in a list of things he suffers for Christ.

My book *Faith with Grit for the Not-Yet Healed* (AmyLu Riley, 2019) contains an in-depth discussion regarding Paul's thorn.

Also by AmyLu Riley



Faith with Grit

"I know God can heal me, so why doesn't he?" That one spiritual issue can cause more hurt than many physical problems combined. Maybe you're facing this. While your faith is a lifeline, something painful just isn't adding up. Come on a quest for the kind of faith *your* spirit needs to live strong.



Stay: Why I'm Still Here, A Spiritual Memoir

AmyLu wanted God to show her what she needed to accomplish in this life so she could just do it and be free to go home. But God didn't want a transaction. He wanted a restoration. You're invited into an intimate inner journey. Be encouraged by seeing how God took what looked like an ending and quietly made it into a new beginning. Just like he wants to do for you.

For book ordering information, visit

<https://amylu-riley.com/books>